

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Passaic Woman Pleads Guilty to Three Bank Robberies

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TRENTON – A Passaic woman pleaded guilty today to federal bank robbery charges, admitting she committed 3 bank robberies in Passaic County, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Norma Balderas-Dehernandez, 35, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Joel A. Pisano to a 3-count Information, charging her with bank robbery. Judge Pisano continued the defendant's home incarceration pending sentencing, which is scheduled for April 20.

At her plea hearing, Balderas-Dehernandez admitted robbing the following banks:

- Jan. 5, 2009, American Bank of New Jersey in Clifton of \$5,000;
- May 2, 2009, Capital One Bank in Passaic of \$2400;
- Aug. 10, 2009, PNC Bank in Clifton of \$760.

Balderas-Dehernandez admitted that for each robbery, she approached a teller and handed the teller a note, which was written in Spanish, that stated she had a gun and ordered the teller to give her money.

Balderas-Dehernandez was apprehended on Aug. 26, 2009, during an attempt to rob a different PNC Bank branch located in Clifton.

Each of the three counts carries a maximum statutory sentence of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. In addition, Balderas-Dehernandez must pay restitution to the victims of her offense.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Pisano will consult the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The Judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Fishman credited Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Kevin B. Cruise, and police officers with the police departments in Clifton, Garfield, Belleville, and police officers with the Passaic County Sheriff's Department, with the investigation leading to the guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lakshmi Srinivasan Herman of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Newark.

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Defense Attorney: Robert J. Galluccio, Esq. Paterson